



Dominic Perrottet
Treasurer

Adam Marshall
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOTEL QUARANTINE COSTS HALVED FOR OVERSEAS AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

With the State's primary industries sector hard-hit by COVID-induced workforce shortages, the NSW Government has today announced a significant boost for farmers by subsidising half the quarantine costs for overseas agricultural workers.

NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Agriculture Adam Marshall announced the subsidy at the iconic Sydney Royal Easter Show today, saying labour shortages in the agricultural sector remained at critical levels.

"We know that our primary producers rely on seasonal and foreign workers, but we have heard loud and clear that the cost of mandatory quarantine is a significant barrier for farming businesses wanting to employ overseas workers," Mr Marshall said.

"As a result of today's announcement, we expect to see an increase in applications through the Pacific Labour Scheme and or Seasonal Worker Program as the proposition for farmers becomes a lot more viable."

Mr Perrottet said overseas agricultural workers entering the country under the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) or Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) will be eligible for a 50 per cent subsidy of the cost of mandatory quarantine to reduce the cost to industry from \$3,000 per person to \$1,500 per person for 2020-21.

"COVID-19 has thrown up all sorts of challenges, and this will help our vital agricultural sector which is worth almost \$16 billion to the NSW economy each year," Mr Perrottet said.

"Assisting Australians who want to return home will continue to be our number one priority, but we can't ignore the importance of our agricultural sector and its critical need for workers."

Mandatory hotel quarantine remains a critical part of the State's COVID defence and any international arrivals are required to enter hotel quarantine in accordance with the Public Health Orders.

Mr Marshall said the NSW Government had already implemented a range of measures to overcome the shortage, but today's announcement was the most significant.

"Since international borders shut, we have worked with industry to find a solution that is cost-effective and today's announcement allows industry and government to share the costs of mandatory quarantine," Mr Marshall said.

“We spearheaded the Ag Workers’ Code, approved almost 1,200 overseas seasonal workers and successfully launched the ‘Help Harvest NSW’ website to connect ag employers with out of work Australians.

“Now, by subsidising half the quarantine costs for overseas agricultural workers, we have made it more commercially viable for the farmers to get the workforce they need.”

All seasonal workers approved to quarantine in NSW during the 2020/21 financial year will be eligible for the subsidy, provided the majority of their work is undertaken in NSW.

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